

Rim process for moulding parts of polyurethane foam with coloured skin.

Publication number: EP0594981

Publication date: 1994-05-04

Inventor: KAWAKITA YUKIO TOYODA GOSEI TE (JP);
SUGIYAMA SHOGO TOYODA GOSEI TE (JP);
NAGASAKA NAOHISA TOYODA GOSEI (JP)

Applicant: TOYODA GOSEI KK (JP)

Classification:

- **international:** B29B7/76; B29C44/04; B29C44/34; B29C67/24;
B29C33/60; B29B7/00; B29C44/02; B29C44/34;
B29C67/24; B29C33/56; (IPC1-7): B29K75/00;
B29C67/24; B29C67/22

- **european:** B29B7/76H; B29C44/04K; B29C44/34G; B29C67/24D

Application number: EP19930114078 19930902

Priority number(s): JP19920315845 19921030

Also published as:

JP6143340 (A)
EP0594981 (B1)

Cited documents:

DE3640474
EP0461522
NL7702676
FR2140076
EP0295529

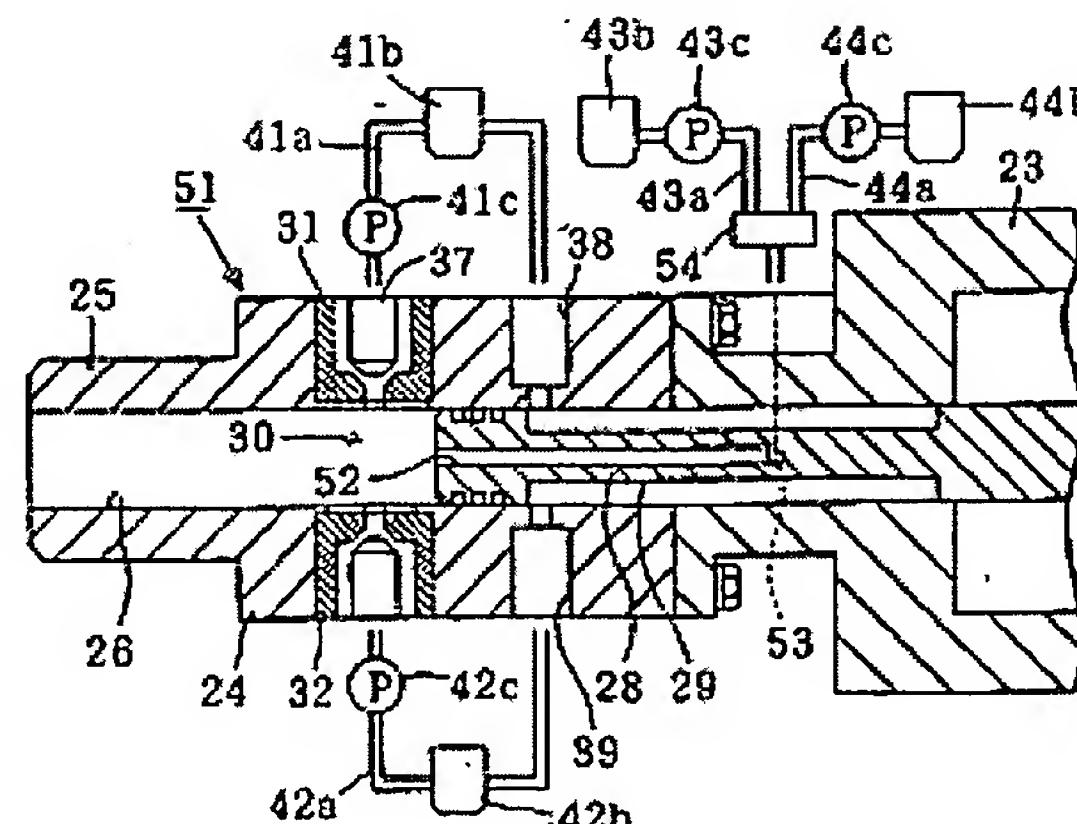
[more >>](#)

[Report a data error here](#)

Abstract of EP0594981

It is object of the present invention to provide a method by which a variable property component, such as two-color parts, having the interior covered with a thin film of the surface area is molded from polyurethanes by RIM, eliminating the need for separately applying a mold release agent or colorants to the cavity surface. Greater latitude in design due to varying physical characteristics is provided.

Fig. 12



Data supplied from the **esp@cenet** database - Worldwide



(19)

Europäisches Patentamt

European Patent Office

Office européen des brevets



(11)

EP 0 594 981 B1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

(45) Date of publication and mention
of the grant of the patent:
09.07.1997 Bulletin 1997/28

(51) Int. Cl.⁶: B29C 67/24, B29C 44/02
// B29K75/00

(21) Application number: 93114078.4

(22) Date of filing: 02.09.1993

(54) Rim process for moulding parts of polyurethane foam with coloured skin

RIM-Verfahren zur Herstellung von Formteilen aus Polyurethanschaumstoff mit gefärbter Haut

Procédé RIM pour mouler des pièces en mousse de polyuréthane à peau colorée

**(84) Designated Contracting States:
DE FR GB**

(74) Representative: Blumbach, Kramer & Partner
Patentanwälte
Radeckestrasse 43
81245 München (DE)

(30) Priority: 30.10.1992 JP 315845/92

(56) References cited:

EP-A- 0 461 522
FR-A- 2 140 076

(73) Proprietor: TOYODA GOSEI CO., LTD.
Nishikasugai-cho, Aichi-ken (JP)

- PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 8, no. 47 (M-280) 2 March 1984 & JP-A-58 201 621 (HITACHI SEISAKUSHO KK) 24 November 1983
- MODERN PLASTICS INTERNATIONAL vol. 15, no. 4, April 1985, LAUSANNE CH pages 58 - 60 J.A. SNELLER 'Integral-color RIM: It's a real alternative to painting'

(72) Inventors:

- Kawakita, Yukio,
Toyoda Gosei Tech. Center
Inazawa-shi, Aichi (JP)
- Sugiyama, Shogo,
Toyoda Gosei Tech. Center
Inazawa-shi, Aichi (JP)
- Nagasaka, Naohisa,
Toyoda Gosei Tech. Center
Inazawa-shi, Aichi (JP)

EP 0 594 981 B1

Note: Within nine months from the publication of the mention of the grant of the European patent, any person may give notice to the European Patent Office of opposition to the European patent granted. Notice of opposition shall be filed in a written reasoned statement. It shall not be deemed to have been filed until the opposition fee has been paid. (Art. 99(1) European Patent Convention).

Description

The present invention relates to a method of molding a polyurethane product which has variable physical properties, such as, different colors, hardness, etc. between the outer and inner portions. The polyurethane materials applicable in the present invention are those which are known to those skilled in reaction-injection molding (RIM) methods.

The conventional RIM technology for molding polyurethane parts includes applying a mold release agent to the surface of the mold cavity. If necessary, an insert is set in the cavity of the mold. A RIM polyurethane material is then injected into the cavity so that the respective components will react to cure; and the mold is opened and the molded part is removed.

Among these steps, the application of the mold release agent accounts for a large portion of the molding cycle and hence, it is an impediment to reducing the cycle time. Furthermore, the use of a single type of RIM polyurethane material makes it difficult to provide different properties in the surface and the interior of the molded part (providing different blow ratios is all that can be presently accomplished). It has been impossible to achieve free alterations in various characteristics such as a feeling of touch and endurance. Although polyurethane molding by RIM is sometimes done after pigment-containing polyurethane materials (colorants) can be applied to the surface of the mold cavity, such an application step is time-consuming.

DE-A 36 40 474 concerns a process for manufacturing articles from polyurethanes by RIM wherein the material of the outer layer and the material of the core have different properties. Additional pressure is to be applied to the mold at least during the second half of the step of filling the form in order to pressurize the core material and thereby also the material of the surface-forming material.

EP-A 0 461 522 discloses a process for manufacturing articles from polyurethanes by RIM wherein no low boiling point blowing agent is used for foaming the polyurethane material in the mold, but water is employed as the blowing agent. In order to achieve that the blowing agent water (including carbon dioxide in the system emerging from the chemical reaction) is evaporating even at temperatures of 70 to 90 °C, vacuum is applied to the mold so as to obtain a foaming of the blowing agent water in the central part of the polyurethane material.

An object of the present invention is to provide a novel method of molding variable property polyurethane parts by RIM, such that, for example, two-color parts having an interior portion covered with a thin surface film throughout the surface area. Further, the present invention provides for incorporation of commonly used components in the surface forming operation such that the overall RIM process may be simplified. For example, if a mold release agent is incorporated in the surface area forming operation, a separate step of applying the

agent may be omitted; if a desirable colorant is incorporated in the surface forming operation, a separate step of applying the colorant may be omitted; furthermore, if a predetermined catalyst is incorporated in the surface forming operation, or if some other suitable component is adopted to provide different properties in the surface area and the interior, the latitude in changing various characteristics such as a feeling of touch and endurance can be enhanced.

The present invention concerns a method of molding a differential property polyurethane part by RIM, said method comprising the steps of

- filling the cavity of a mold under vacuum with a small amount of a surface forming RIM polyurethane material; and
- thereafter filling said cavity with an interior forming RIM polyurethane material different in composition from that of said surface forming RIM polyurethane material for subsequent molding by RIM.

Broadly described, the method of molding differential property, such as two-color, polyurethane parts by RIM according to the present invention entails filling the cavity of a mold under vacuum with a small amount of a surface forming RIM polyurethane material followed by filling the cavity with an interior forming RIM polyurethane material for subsequent molding by RIM. In a preferred embodiment, the surface forming RIM polyurethane material contains at least one auxiliary component selected from among a colorant, a mold release agent or a catalyst such that differential properties are attained by inclusion or application of the auxiliary component.

For selective injection of the two types of RIM polyurethane material (one for forming the surface area and the other for forming the interior) according to the present invention, one of the following four methods, for example, may be employed.

(1) Using a three-component mixing head, the principal components (i.e., a polyol component and an isocyanate component) and an auxiliary component are delivered into a mixing chamber where they are mixed by impingement and the resulting mixture is injected in a small amount as the surface forming RIM polyurethane material. Then, the delivery of the auxiliary component is ceased and the polyol and isocyanate components are similarly mixed by impingement before injection as the interior forming RIM polyurethane material.

(2) Using a three-component mixing head, the passageway for a third component which is one of the auxiliary components is controlled in such a way that a fourth component which is a further auxiliary component is charged into the exit portion of the mixing chamber. First, the principal components (i.e., the polyol and isocyanate components) and the charged fourth component are delivered into

the mixing chamber where they are mixed by impingement and the resulting mixture is injected as the surface forming RIM polyurethane material. If there is no fourth component left, the third component will be delivered spontaneously and the three components (i.e., the third component and the polyol as well as isocyanate components) are similarly mixed by impingement before injection as the interior forming RIM polyurethane material.

(3) Using a four-component mixing head, the principal components (i.e., the polyol and isocyanate components) and a fourth component, which is one of the auxiliary components, are delivered into the mixing chamber where they are mixed by impingement and the resulting mixture is injected in a small amount as the surface forming RIM polyurethane material. Then, the delivery of the fourth component is ceased and the polyol and isocyanate components as well as the third component which is the other auxiliary component are similarly mixed by impingement before injection as the interior forming RIM polyurethane material.

(4) By adjusting the pump delivery of the polyol or isocyanate component to the mixing head, the mixing ratio of the two principal components is varied before they are injected successively as the surface or interior forming RIM polyurethane material.

According to the method of the present invention, two-color parts, for example, the interior of which is covered with a thin film on its outer surface can be molded by RIM from polyurethane. Although the mechanism of the present invention is not completely understood, it is believed that when the cavity of a mold under vacuum is filled with a small amount of the surface forming RIM polyurethane material, the injected polyurethane material, as it undergoes a sudden drop in pressure from the existing pressurized state, scatters within the cavity and is deposited in a thin film on the surface of the cavity, thereby forming the outer surface layer of the two-color part to be eventually molded. When the interior forming RIM polyurethane material is thereafter injected into the cavity, the injected polyurethane material fills the cavity and its components react to cure, forming the interior of the two-color part. As a result, there is molded the two-color part; the interior of which is covered with the thin film on the outer surface layer.

In a preferred embodiment, at least one auxiliary component selected from, for example, a colorant, a mold release agent and a catalyst may be mixed with the surface forming RIM polyurethane material. This is effective in ensuring that the eventually molded two-color part can be easily rendered to have different colors, properties, etc., in the surface area and the interior. Stated specifically, better release of the molded part is achieved by mixing a mold release agent with the polyurethane material. When a colorant is mixed, the colored surface area will effectively mask the interior of the molded part. If a catalyst is mixed to control a cer-

tain quality such as endurance, hardness or foam density, different properties can be produced in the surface area and the interior.

The invention is further illustrated by referring to the Figures wherein

Fig. 1 is a cross-sectional view showing the step of forming the surface area of a polyurethane coating on a steering wheel in an embodiment according to the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a cross-sectional view showing the step of forming the interior of the polyurethane coating in the embodiment of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a cross-sectional view showing the step of removing the molded part;

Fig. 4 is a cross-sectional view of the polyurethane coating molded in two colors;

Fig. 5 is a cross-sectional view of the mixing head in molding the polyurethane coating;

Fig. 6 is a cross section taken on line A-A of Fig. 5;

Fig. 7 is a cross section taken on line B-B of Fig. 5;

Fig. 8 illustrates the results of the test conducted in order to investigate the relationship between the length of the surface area of the polyurethane coating and the degree of vacuum in the mold cavity for the case where the surface forming RIM polyurethane material was injected in an amount of 50 g;

Fig. 9 illustrates the results of the test conducted in order to investigate the relationship between the length of the surface area of the polyurethane coating and the degree of vacuum in the mold cavity for the case where the surface forming RIM polyurethane material was injected in an amount of 100 g;

Fig. 10 is a graph plotting the test results shown in Fig. 8 together with those shown in Fig. 9;

Fig. 11 is a cross-sectional view showing the two-color molding of a steering wheel pad in a second embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 12 is a cross-sectional view of the mixing head used in the molding of the pad.

The present invention will be further described in the following illustrative embodiments.

A first embodiment according to the present invention provides a steering wheel produced is described below with reference to Figs. 1 to 10. The molding apparatus to be used in this embodiment comprises, basically, a mold 1, a vacuum box 11 and a feed injection mechanism 21 as shown in Figs. 1 to 7. These basic parts of the molding apparatus are described below in further detail.

The mold 1 consists of two split parts, an upper mold 2 and a lower mold 3. The parting line (PL) between the two molds is provided with a cavity surface 5 that forms an annular cavity 4 upon mold closing and a feed passageway 6 to the cavity 4. A venthole 7 is formed in the upper mold 2 at the position where it is to

be finally filled with a polyurethane material.

The vacuum box 11 consists of two split parts, an upper box 12 and a lower box 13. The upper box 12 contains the upper mold 2 and the lower box 13 contains the lower mold 3. The upper box 12 and the lower box 13 are fitted on a clamping unit (not shown). In the embodiment under consideration, the lower box 13 will move up and down, so that the vacuum box 11 is opened and closed in synchronism with the opening and closing of the mold 1. An O-ring 14 is fitted in a groove formed in the parting face of the upper box 12; when the vacuum box 11 is closed, the O-ring 14 will contact the parting face of the lower box 13 so as to seal the space between the upper and lower boxes.

The lower box 13 is fitted with a suction plug 15 which is connected via a suction hose 16 and a valve 17 to a vacuum pump 18. The lower box 13 is also furnished with an inspection window 19 that is provided to ensure airtightness and through which the area around the venthole 7 can be seen from the outside of the vacuum box 11.

The feed injection mechanism 21 is furnished with a four-component mixing head 22 of the type shown in Figs. 5 to 7 and it is adapted to ensure that the principal components (i.e., the polyol and isocyanate components) are selectively mixed with either one of the auxiliary components (i.e., the third or fourth component). The four-component mixing head 22 comprises a cylinder 23 and a body 24 fitted to its distal end. The body 24 has a slender injection nozzle 25 at the tip.

A through-hole 26 is formed in the center of the box 24 and a spool 28 fitted on a piston 27 in the cylinder 23 is slidably inserted into the hole 26. A pair of longitudinally extending grooves 29 are formed in diametric positions on the periphery of the spool 28. In response to the reciprocating motion of the piston 27, the spool 28 slides either to the advanced position shown in Fig. 6 or to the retracted position shown in Fig. 7. When in the retracted position, the spool 28 has in front of it a mixing compartment 30 where the necessary components of the feed are to be mixed together in the manner to be described hereinafter.

The body 24 has in its interior a polyol component supply nozzle member 31 on the left side (see Fig. 5) which is disposed to face an isocyanate component supply nozzle member 32 on the right side. The body 24 also has in its interior a third component supply nozzle member 33 in the upper portion (also see Fig. 5) which is disposed to face a fourth component supply nozzle member 34 in the lower portion. Each of the four nozzle members is in a cylindrical shape and has a tapered orifice 35 formed in such a way that it opens to the mixing compartment 30 or elongated grooves 29. A holder 36 of the nozzle members 31 to 34 is fitted around the body 24, and needles 37 are inserted into the holder in such a way that their tips will control the degree of opening of the orifices 35. Next to the nozzle members 31 and 32 in the body 24, there are formed a polyol component returning hole 38 and an isocyanate component return-

ing hole 39, both of which are open to the elongated grooves 29.

The nozzle member 31 and the return hole 38 are connected via hose 41a to a polyol component tank 41b and pump 41c, thereby forming circulation path of the polyol component (tank 41b pump 41c nozzle member 31 elongated groove 29 return hole 38 tank 41c). The nozzle member 32 and the return hole 39 are also connected via hose 42a to an isocyanate component tank 42b and pump 42c, thereby forming a circulation path of the isocyanate component (tank 42b pump 42c nozzle member 32 elongated groove 29 return hole 39 tank 42b).

The nozzle member 33 is connected via hose 43a to a third component tank 43b, pump 43c and valve 43d, thereby forming a one-way supply path (tank 43b pump 43c valve 43d nozzle member 33). The nozzle member 34 is also connected via hose 44a to a fourth component tank 44b, pump 44c and valve 44d, thereby forming a one-way supply path (tank 44b pump 44c valve 44d nozzle member 34).

The injection nozzle 25 on the four-component mixing head 22 penetrates a through-hole 40 in the lower box 13 to be connected to the feed passageway 6 in the lower mold 3. The space between the four-component mixing head 22 and the inner surface of the through-hole 40 is sealed by means of a plurality of O-rings 50, as shown in Fig. 1.

The method of molding a differential property polyurethane component, such as a two-color component where the surface and interior portions have different colors, by RIM, using the apparatus described above is discussed below in terms of the sequence of steps involved.

- 35 (1) The mold 1 is opened and a mold release agent is applied to the cavity surface 5 defined by the upper mold 2 and lower mold 3.
- 40 (2) The core 46 of a steering wheel 45 is set in the lower mold 3; then the mold 1 is closed to form the cavity 4 while, at the same time, the vacuum box 11 is closed airtight.
- 45 (3) The vacuum pump 18 is operated to produce a suitable degree of vacuum within the vacuum box 11, and the interior of the cavity 4 is evacuated via the venthole 7.
- 50 (4) With the cavity 4 being evacuated continuously as shown in Fig. 1, a surface forming RIM polyurethane material U1 is prepared in the manner described below and a small amount of it is injected into the cavity 4 through the nozzle 25. First, the spool 28 is retracted and the polyol component, the isocyanate component and the fourth component (i.e., a first colorant) are delivered into the mixing compartment through the nozzle member 31, the nozzle member 32 and the nozzle member 34, respectively. These components are then mixed by impingement to prepare the surface forming RIM polyurethane material U1. In this case, the third

component is not delivered into the mixing compartment 30.

However, in the case where a mold release agent is incorporated in the surface area forming operation, the mold release agent applying step (1) may be omitted.

(5) With the cavity 4 being evacuated continuously as shown in Fig. 2, an interior forming RIM polyurethane material U2 is prepared in the manner described below and injected into the cavity 4 through the nozzle 25. In this case, the delivery of the fourth component in the previous step is ceased when a predetermined amount has been delivered. Then, with the polyol and isocyanate components being delivered continuously, a second colorant, as the third component, is pumped into the mixing compartment 30 through the nozzle member 33. The respective components are then mixed by impingement to prepare the interior forming RIM polyurethane material U2. In the embodiment under consideration, this interior forming RIM polyurethane material U2 is substantially free of a blowing agent.

The injected interior forming RIM polyurethane material U2 will fill the cavity 4 in the following manner. First, in the part of the material U2 which is distant from the cavity face 5, the gas inherently involved in U2 will boil up under vacuum, thus forming a core portion of high blow ratio. In the part of the material U2 which is to be close to the cavity face 5, a dense self-skin producing layer of low blow ratio is formed by the degasifying action in a vacuum atmosphere. Formed in this manner is an interior 49 that consists of the core and the self-skin producing layer. It should be noted that the flowing tip of the material U2 will blow out of the venthole 7 in a small amount, thus producing a blowout portion 9.

(6) After confirming that the surface forming RIM polyurethane material U1 and the interior forming RIM polyurethane material U2 have cured, the mold 1 is opened and, at the same time, the vacuum box 11 is opened. Finally, the steering wheel 45 with a polyurethane coating 47 is taken out of the mold and the blowout portion 9 is removed.

The two-color polyurethane coating 47 thus produced by RIM is characterized in that the surface area 48 is adequately tinted with the first colorant which is admixed as the fourth component with the surface forming RIM polyurethane material U1; furthermore, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4, the surface area 48 forms a thin film that covers the entire surface of the interior 49 on account of its excellent masking ability and, hence, the steering wheel 45 provided with the polyurethane coating 47 can be sold as such on the market. Therefore, according to the embodiment under consideration, the conventional process of applying a colorant to the cavity surface 5 prior to molding can be omitted.

5 The present inventors conducted tests in order to investigate how the evacuation of the cavity 4 and the amount of colorant to be admixed with the surface forming polyurethane material U1 should be adjusted to ensure that the surface area 48 of the polyurethane coating 47 molded by means of the molding machine shown in Figs. 1 to 7 will cover the entire surface of the interior 49. The core 46 of the steering wheel employed had a circumference of 120 cm.

10 In the first test, the degree of vacuum in the cavity 4 was set at five levels 13.3, 18.6, 45.2, 61.2 and 81.1 mbar (10, 14, 34, 46 and 67 Torr), and the necessary molding components were injected by the following procedure for the respective cases.

15 (i) The surface forming RIM polyurethane material U1 that was composed by mixing the first colorant (i.e., the fourth component), polyol component and isocyanate component in a weight ratio of 1:10:5 was injected in an amount of 50 g;

20 (ii) Subsequently, the interior forming RIM polyurethane material U2 that was composed by mixing the second colorant (i.e., the third component), polyol component and isocyanate component in a weight ratio of 1:10:5 was injected in an amount of 400 g;

25 (iii) Thereafter, the two feeds were blown and cured to produce molded parts.

30 The polyol component was a polyether-base polyol produced by Sanyo Chemical Industries Ltd. under the trade name "FA-760" (av. mol. wt. ca. 5,000), and the isocyanate component was a methyl diisocyanate (MDI) prepolymer produced by Nippon Polyurethane Industry Co., Ltd. under the trade name "COLLONATE^R 1051". The respective colorants were prepared by mixing the associated pigments (6 parts by weight) with the above-mentioned polyol component (9 parts by weight).

35 In the present invention, a polyether-base polyol, a polyester-base polyol, a polyacryl-base polyol, polyeoxy-base polyol or polybutadiene-base polyol can be used as a polyol component. Further, MDI (methyl diisocyanate), TDI (tolylene diisocyanate), NDI (naphtalene diisocyanate), TODI (tolidine diisocyanate) or XDI (xylene diisocyanate) can be used as a isocyanate component.

40 The results of the first test are shown in Figs. 8 and 10. The surface area 48 could cover the entire circumference of the interior 49 when the degree of vacuum in the cavity 4 was 13.3 mbar (10 Torr). However, when the degree of vacuum was greater than 18.6 mbar (14 Torr), the surface area 48 could cover only part of the interior 49. Furthermore, the higher the pressure in the cavity 4, the shorter the surface area 48 (namely, the two-color part). This is probably due to the surface forming RIM polyurethane material U1 being scattered within the cavity 4 at higher pressures.

45 In the second test, the degree of vacuum in the cavity 4 was set at three levels, 18.6, 45.2 and 172.9 mbar

(14, 34 and 130 Torr), and the necessary molding components were injected by the following procedure for the respective cases.

- (i) The surface forming RIM polyurethane material U1 of the same composition as in the first test were injected in an amount of 100 g;
- (ii) Immediately after, the interior forming RIM polyurethane material U2 of the same composition as in the first test were injected in an amount of 350 g;
- (iii) Thereafter, the two feeds were blown and cured to produce molded parts.

The results of the second test are shown in Figs. 9 and 10. The surface area 48 could cover the entire circumference of the interior 49 even when the degree of vacuum in the cavity 4 was 18.6 mbar (14 Torr). At higher pressures, the surface area 48 covering became smaller at a lower rate than in the first test.

The tests under consideration concern a steering wheel of large circumference, so in the case of molding smaller parts, it is anticipated that complete products can be provided even if the degree of vacuum in the cavity is low or if the surface forming RIM polyurethane material is injected in a small amount.

However, the surface forming RIM polyurethane material and/or the interior forming RIM polyurethane material may be varied in accordance with a surface area, volume, configuration (length, thickness) and so on of the components to be produced, or in accordance with a thickness of the surface layer to be required.

In a second embodiment of the present invention, the method of the present invention provides a molded two-color pad for a steering wheel by RIM as described with reference to Figs. 11 and 12. The molding machine to be used in this second embodiment differs from that which is used in the first embodiment only in terms of the shape of machine parts (e.g., cavity 4) and the construction of the mixing head to be described below. The machine parts that are shown in Figs. 11 and 12 and which are the same as those used in the first embodiment are identified by like numerals and will not be described in detail.

In the second embodiment, a three-component mixing head that is generally indicated by 51 in Fig. 12 is to be employed. This three-component mixing head 51 does not have nozzle members 33 and 34 and, instead, an auxiliary hole 52 for delivery of the third component is provided in the center of the spool 28. The front end of the auxiliary hole 52 opens to the tip face of the spool 28 whereas the rear end of the same hole opens at a point halfway on the circumference of the spool 28. The rear part of the body 24 has a feed hole 53 formed that will communicate with the opening at the rear end of the auxiliary hole 52 only at the time the spool 28 is retracted. The feed hole 53 is connected via a switch valve 54 to the tank 43b and pump 43c for the third component, as well as to the tank 44b and pump 44c for the fourth component. Tank 43b and pump 43c

are connected by the hose 43a whereas tank 44b and pump 44c are connected by the hose 44a; the combination of tank 43b and pump 43c is selectively operable with respect to the combination of tank 44b and 44c.

5 The method of molding a two-color polyurethane part by RIM in the second embodiment under discussion is intended to mold a pad 55 consisting of the surface area 56 and the interior 57. It differs from the molding method of the first embodiment only in the following point. Prior to molding, the switch valve 54 is brought to the side connected to the tank 44b of the fourth component, so that a mixture of a mold release agent and the first colorant (both as the fourth component) is charged to that part of the auxiliary hole 52 where it is adjacent to the exit portion of the mixing compartment 30. Thereafter, the switch valve 54 is brought to the side connected to the tank 43b of the second colorant as the third component.

20 When RIM is conducted with the molding machine preset in the manner described above, the polyol component, the isocyanate component and the fourth component preliminarily charged into the auxiliary hole 52 are delivered to the mixing compartment 30, where they are mixed by impingement to form the surface forming 25 RIM polyurethane material U1, which is thereafter injected into the cavity 4. As in the first embodiment, the injected surface forming RIM polyurethane material U1 provides a thin-film deposit on the cavity surface 5, thereby forming the surface area 56.

30 If the fourth component is no longer present in the auxiliary hole 52, the third component will be delivered spontaneously and, hence, the three components (i.e., the third component and the polyol as well as isocyanate components) are similarly mixed by impingement 35 to form the interior forming RIM polyurethane material U2, which is then injected into the cavity 4. As in the first embodiment, the injected surface forming RIM polyurethane U1 will foam and become fluid to form the interior 57.

40 Hence, according to the second embodiment in which the surface area 56 of the molded pad 55 contains the mold release agent and the first colorant, the conventional step of applying both the release agent and the colorant to the cavity surface 5 before molding starts, can be omitted.

45 It is further noted that the present invention is in no way limited to the two embodiments described above. The present invention has been described with respect to a molded product of two-colors however one skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention is not limited to variable colors but may be useful in providing parts of variable physical properties other than color. The method according to the present invention enables, at a minimum, a two-color part, readily molded from polyurethane by RIM, with the interior of the part being covered by a thin film on its surface area.

50 According to the method of the present invention, application of a mold release agent or a colorant to the cavity surface before molding starts can be omitted and

a greater latitude is provided for altering various characteristics including color, hardness and endurance.

The foregoing description of preferred embodiments of the invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to limit the invention to the preferred embodiments. Modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teachings. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to explain the principles of the invention and its practical application to enable one skilled in the art to utilize the invention.

Claims

1. A method of molding a differential property polyurethane part by RIM, said method comprising the steps of
 - filling the cavity of a mold under vacuum with a small amount of a surface forming RIM polyurethane material; and
 - thereafter filling said cavity with an interior forming RIM polyurethane material different in composition from that of said surface forming RIM polyurethane material for subsequent molding by RIM.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said surface forming RIM polyurethane material contains at least one auxiliary component selected from among a colorant, a mold release agent and a catalyst.
3. A method according to claim 1, wherein said interior forming RIM polyurethane material contains at least one auxiliary component selected from among a colorant, a mold release agent and a catalyst.
4. A method according to claim 1, wherein said surface forming RIM polyurethane material contains a polyol component, an isocyanate component and at least one auxiliary component selected from among a colorant, a mold release agent and a catalyst.
5. A method according to claim 4, wherein said interior forming RIM polyurethane material only contains a polyol component and an isocyanate component.
6. A method according to claim 4, wherein said interior forming RIM polyurethane material contains a polyol component, an isocyanate component and at least one auxiliary component selected from among a colorant, a mold release agent and a catalyst.

Patentansprüche

1. Verfahren zum Formen eines Teils aus Polyurethan mit unterschiedlichen Eigenschaften durch Reaktionsspritzgießen (RIM), wobei das Verfahren die Schritte umfaßt, daß man
 - den Hohlraum einer Form unter Vakuum mit einer Kleinen Menge eines eine Oberfläche bildenden Reaktionsspritzgieß-Polyurethan-Materials füllt; und
 - danach den Hohlraum mit einem einen Innen teil bildenden Reaktionsspritzgieß-Polyurethan-Material füllt, dessen Zusammensetzung verschieden von derjenigen des eine Oberfläche bildenden Reaktionsspritzgieß-Polyurethan-Materials ist, zum anschließenden Formen durch Reaktionsspritzgießen.
2. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, worin das eine Oberfläche bildende Reaktionsspritzgieß-Polyurethan-Material wenigstens eine Hilfskomponente enthält, die gewählt ist aus Färbemittel, Formentrennmittel und Katalysator.
3. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, worin das einen Innen teil bildende Reaktionsspritzgieß-Polyurethan-Material wenigstens eine Hilfskomponente enthält, die gewählt ist aus Färbemittel, Formentrennmittel und Katalysator.
4. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, worin das eine Oberfläche bildende Reaktionsspritzgieß-Polyurethan-Material eine Polyol-Komponente, eine Isocyanat-Komponente und wenigstens eine Hilfskomponente enthält, die gewählt ist aus Färbemittel, Formentrennmittel und Katalysator.
5. Verfahren nach Anspruch 4, worin das einen Innen teil bildende Reaktionsspritzgieß-Polyurethan-Material nur eine Polyol-Komponente und eine Isocyanat-Komponente enthält.
6. Verfahren nach Anspruch 4, worin das einen Innen teil bildende Reaktionsspritzgieß-Polyurethan-Material eine Polyol-Komponente, eine Isocyanat-Komponente und wenigstens eine Hilfskomponente enthält, die gewählt ist aus Färbemittel, Formentrennmittel und Katalysator.

Revendications

- 55 1. Procédé de moulage RIM de pièces en polyuréthane à propriétés variables, ledit procédé comprenant les phases de :
 - remplissage de la cavité d'un moule sous vide

avec une faible quantité d'un matériau en polyuréthane pour le formage de la surface par procédé RIM ; et

- remplissage ultérieur de ladite cavité avec un matériau en polyuréthane pour le formage de l'intérieur, par procédé RIM, de composition différente de celle dudit matériau en polyuréthane pour le formage de la surface par procédé RIM pour moulage ultérieur par procédé RIM.

5

10

2. Procédé selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ledit matériau en polyuréthane pour le formage de la surface par procédé RIM comprend au moins un composant auxiliaire choisi entre un colorant, un agent de démoulage et un catalyseur.

15

3. Procédé selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ledit matériau en polyuréthane pour le formage de l'intérieur par procédé RIM comprend au moins un composant auxiliaire choisi entre un colorant, un agent de démoulage et un catalyseur.

20

4. Procédé selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ledit matériau en polyuréthane pour le formage de la surface par procédé RIM comprend un composant polyol, un composant isocyanate et au moins un composant auxiliaire choisi entre un colorant, un agent de démoulage et un catalyseur.

25

5. Procédé selon la revendication 4, dans lequel ledit matériau en polyuréthane pour le formage de l'intérieur par procédé RIM ne contient qu'un composant polyol et qu'un composant isocyanate.

30

6. Procédé selon la revendication 4, dans lequel ledit matériau en polyuréthane pour le formage de l'intérieur par procédé RIM contient un composant polyol, un composant isocyanate et au moins un composant auxiliaire choisi entre un colorant, un agent de démoulage et un catalyseur.

35

40

45

50

55

FIG. 1

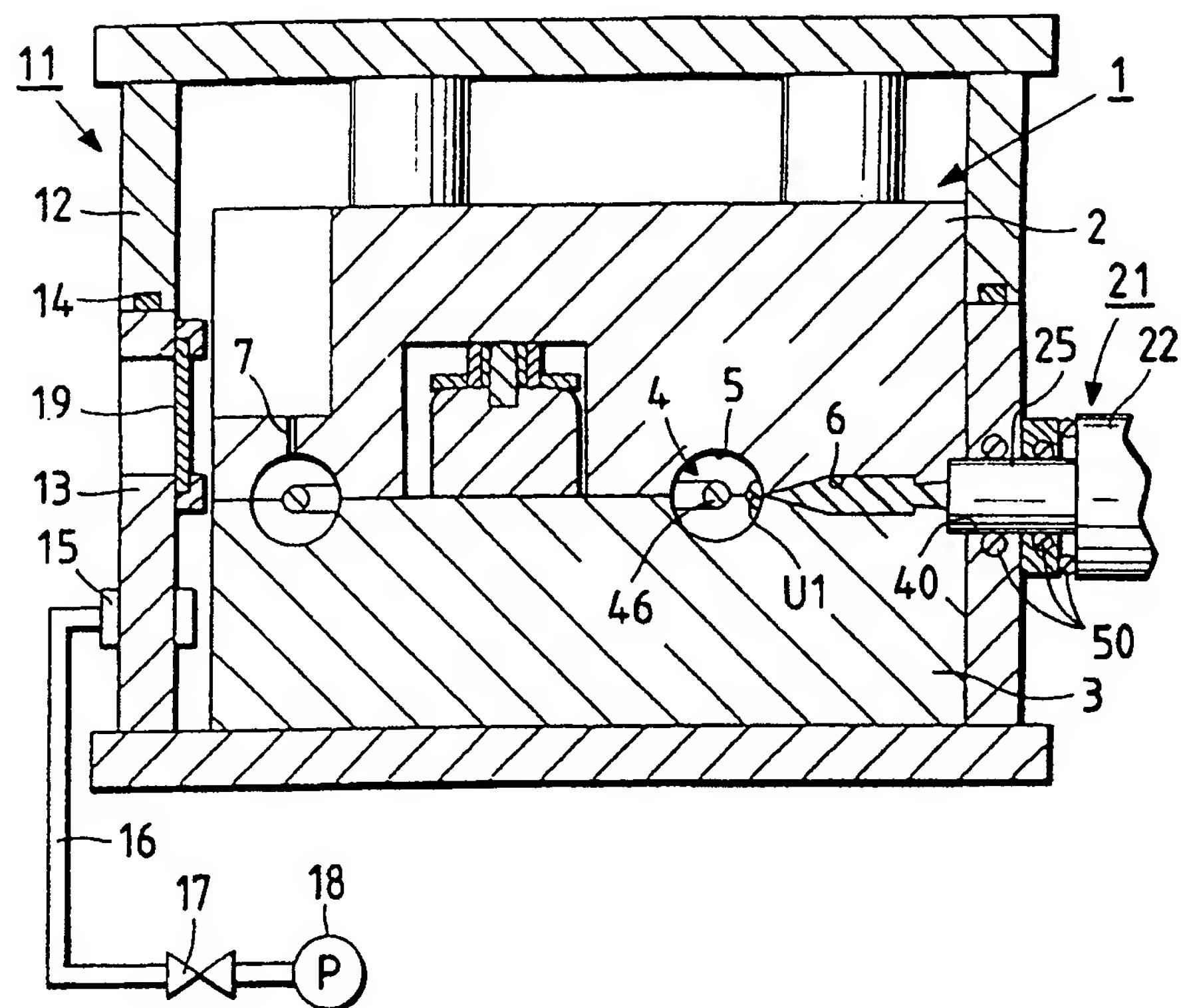


FIG. 2

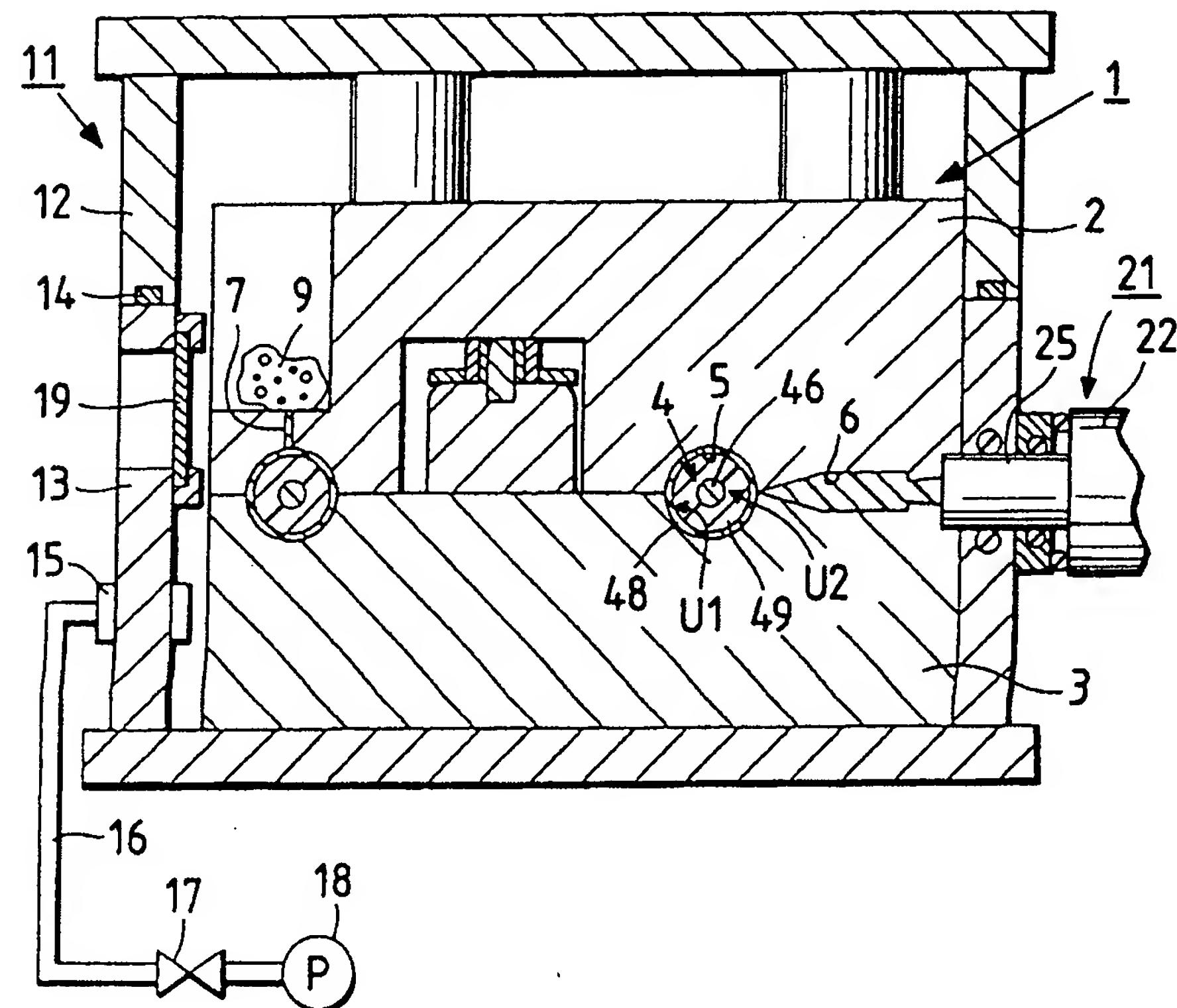


FIG. 3

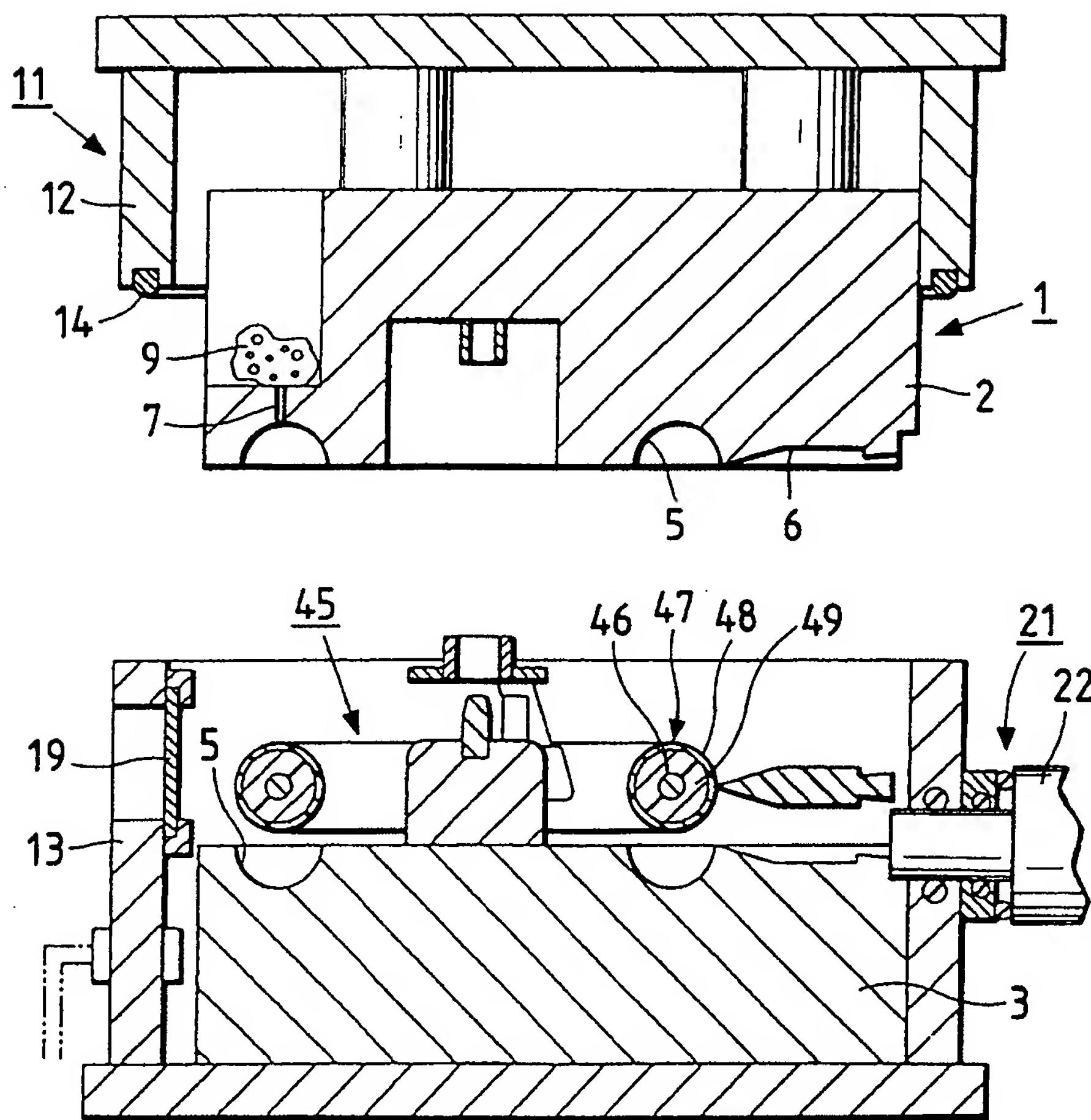


FIG. 4

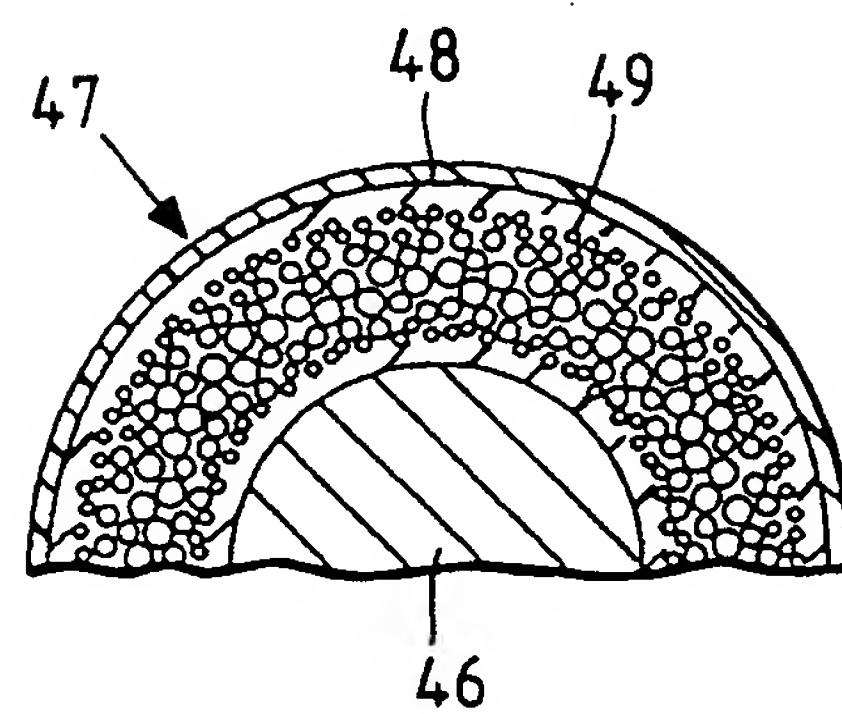


FIG. 5

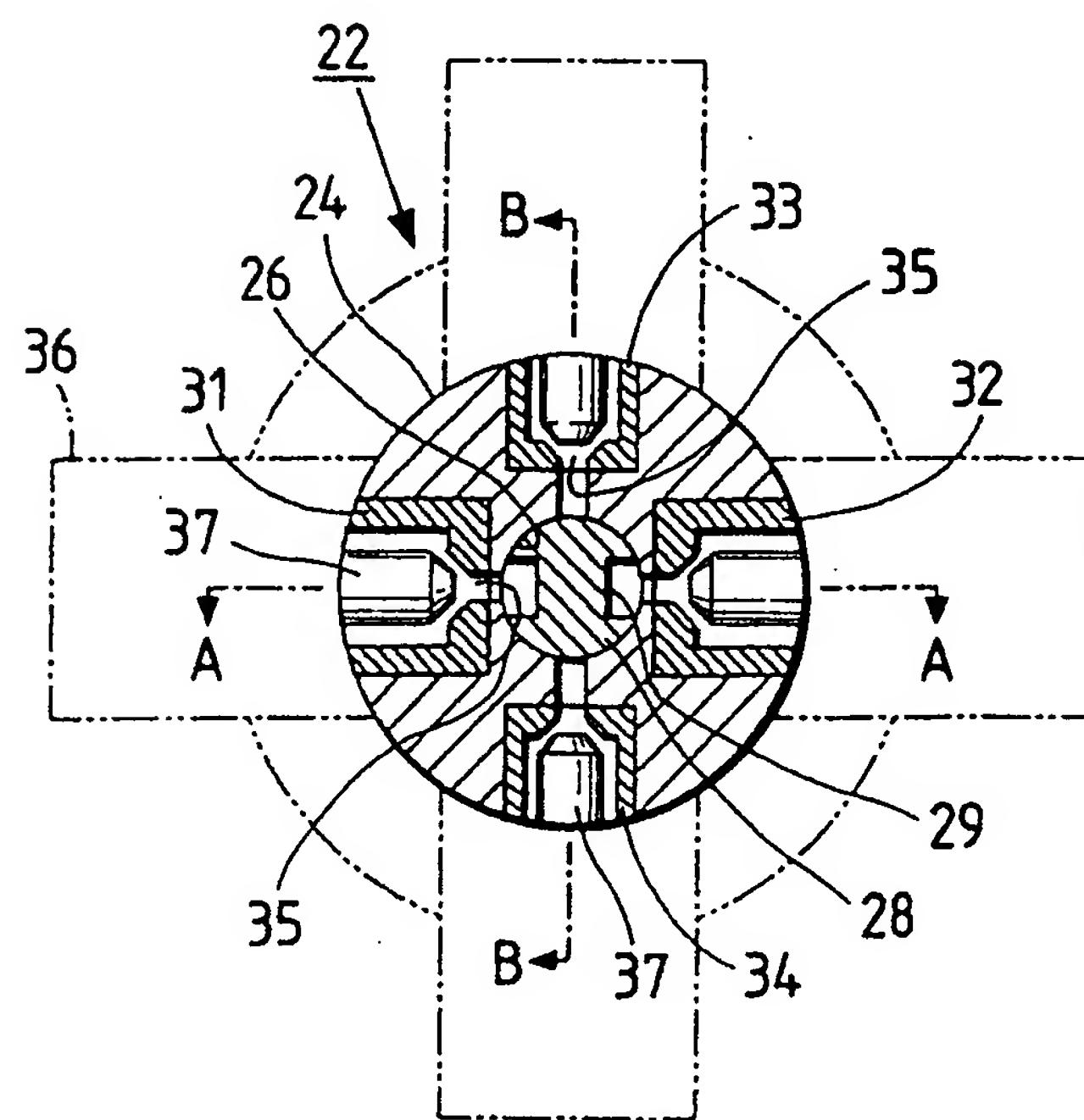


FIG. 6

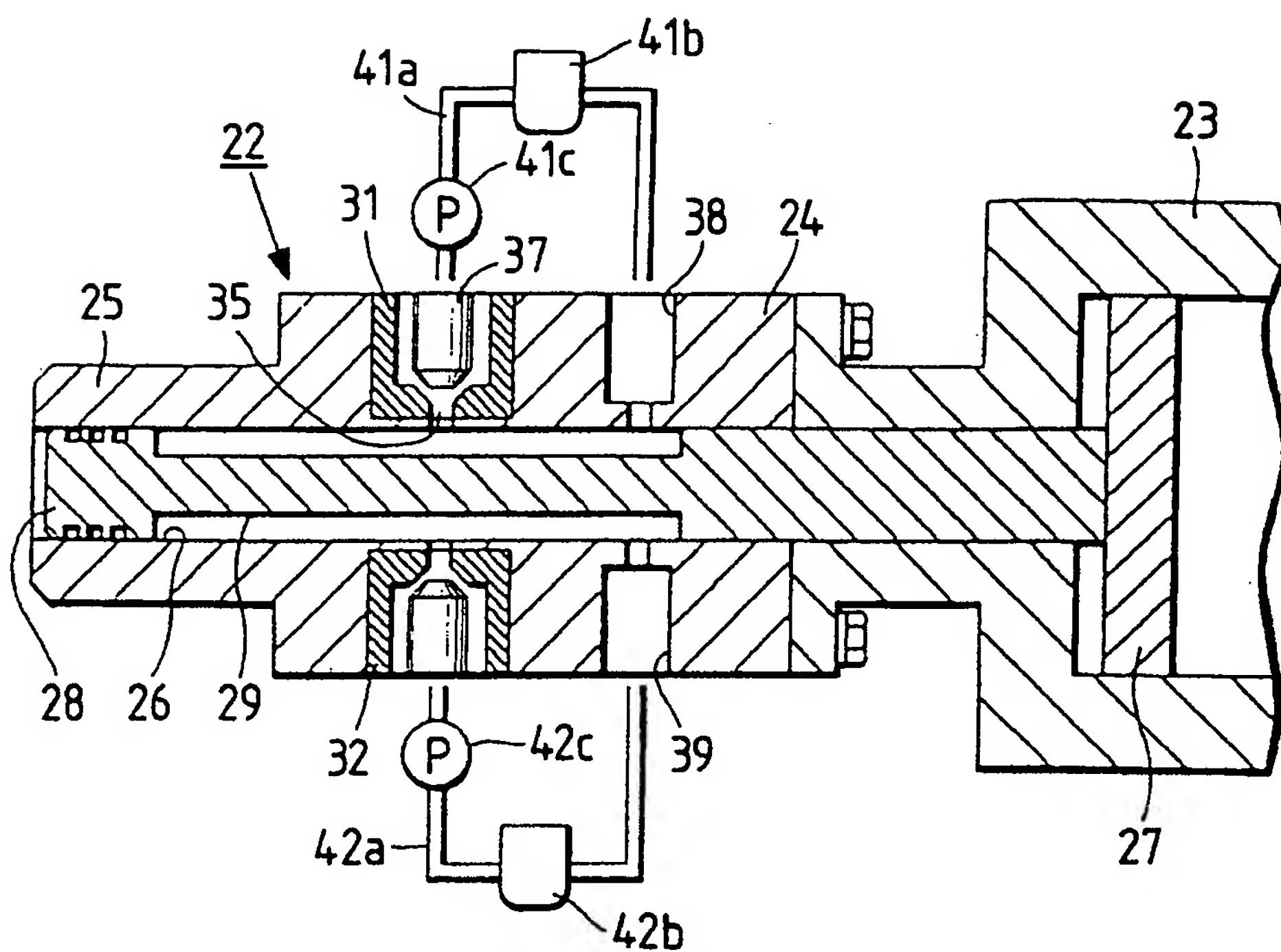


FIG. 7

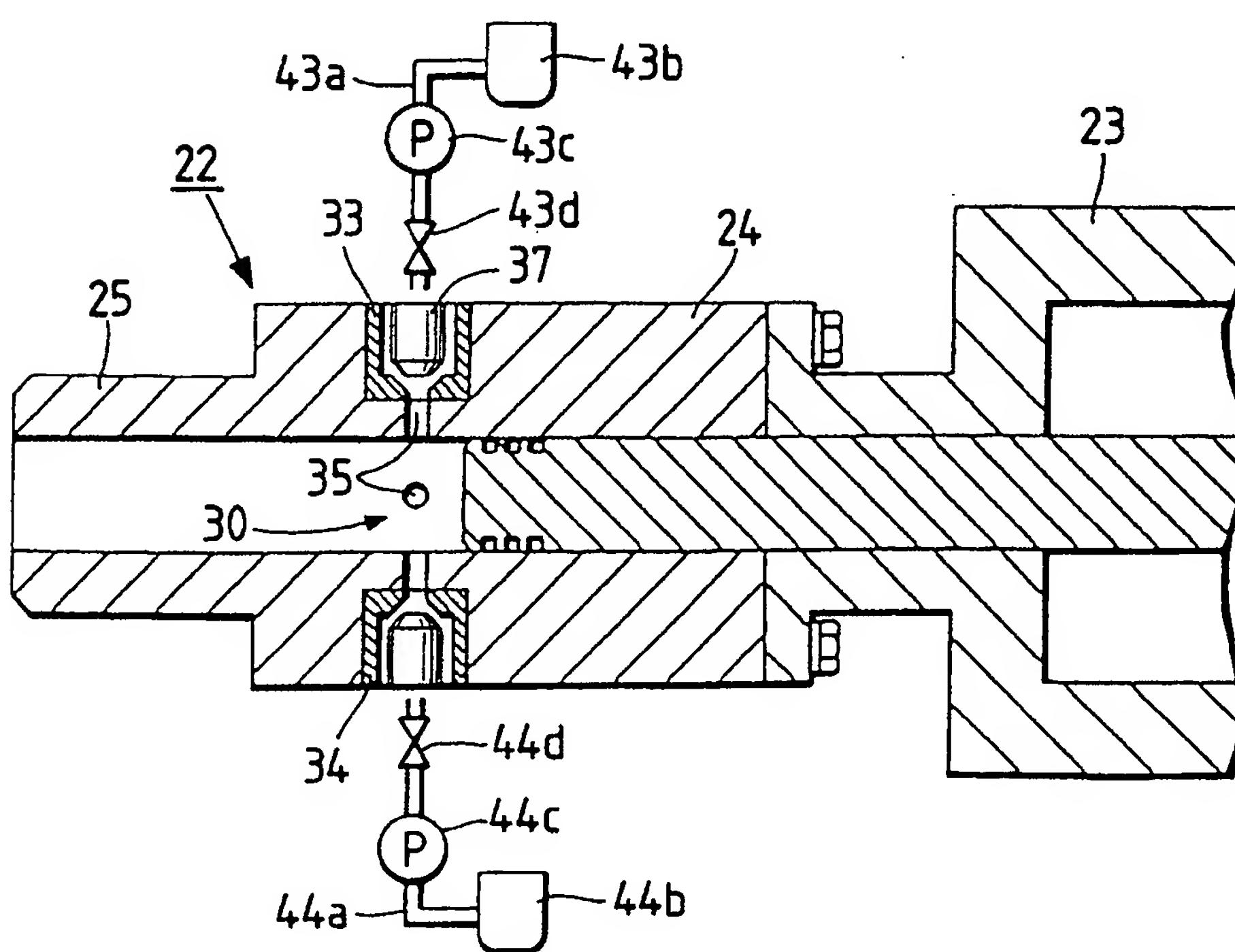


FIG. 8

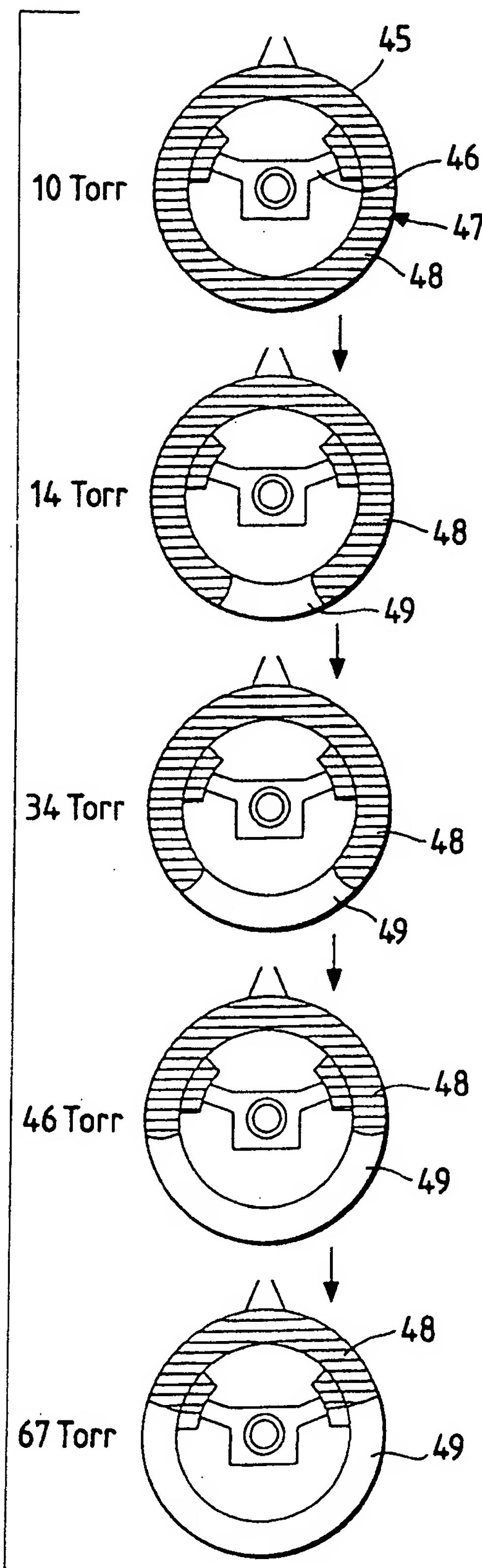


FIG. 9

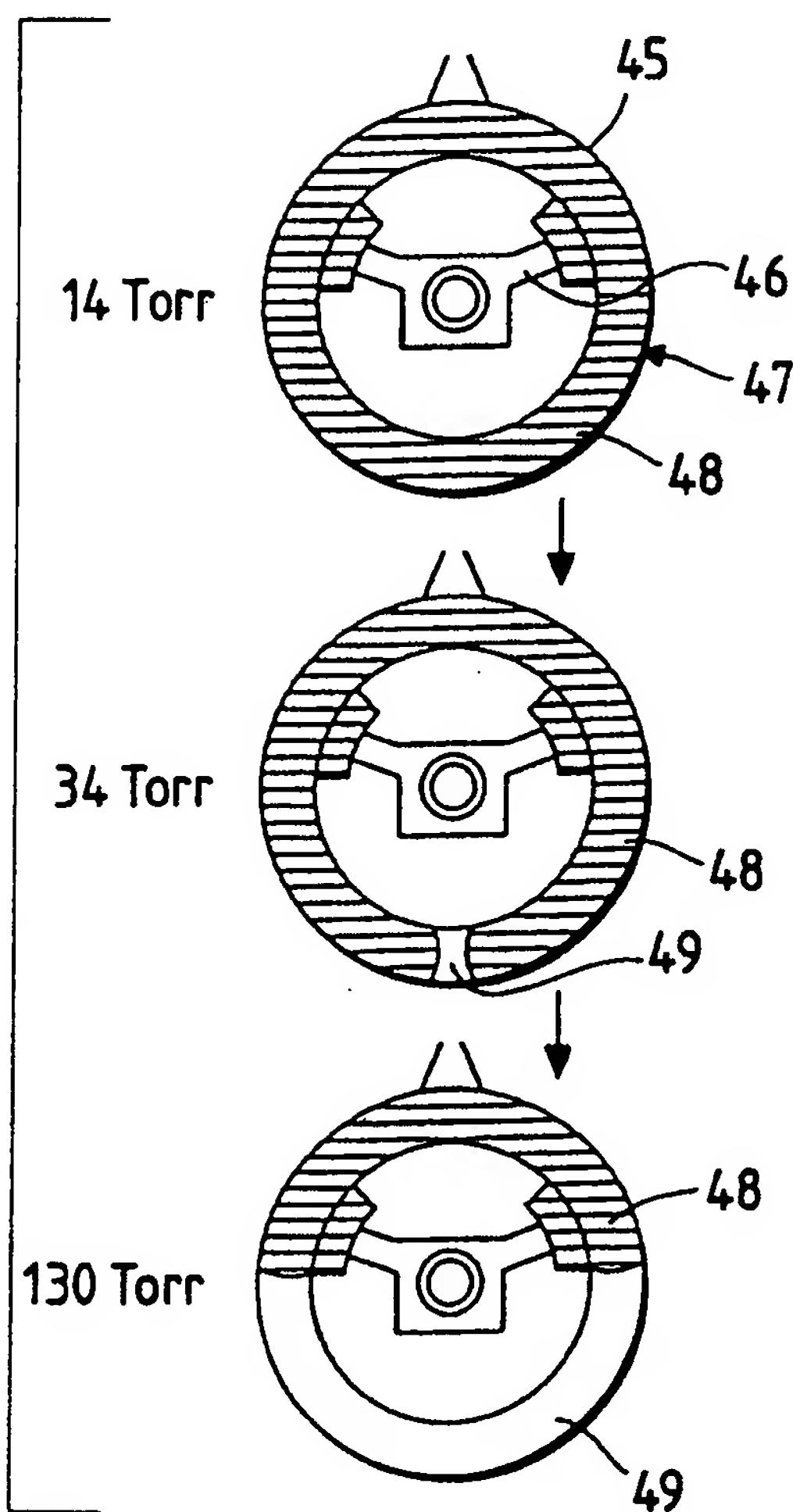


FIG. 10

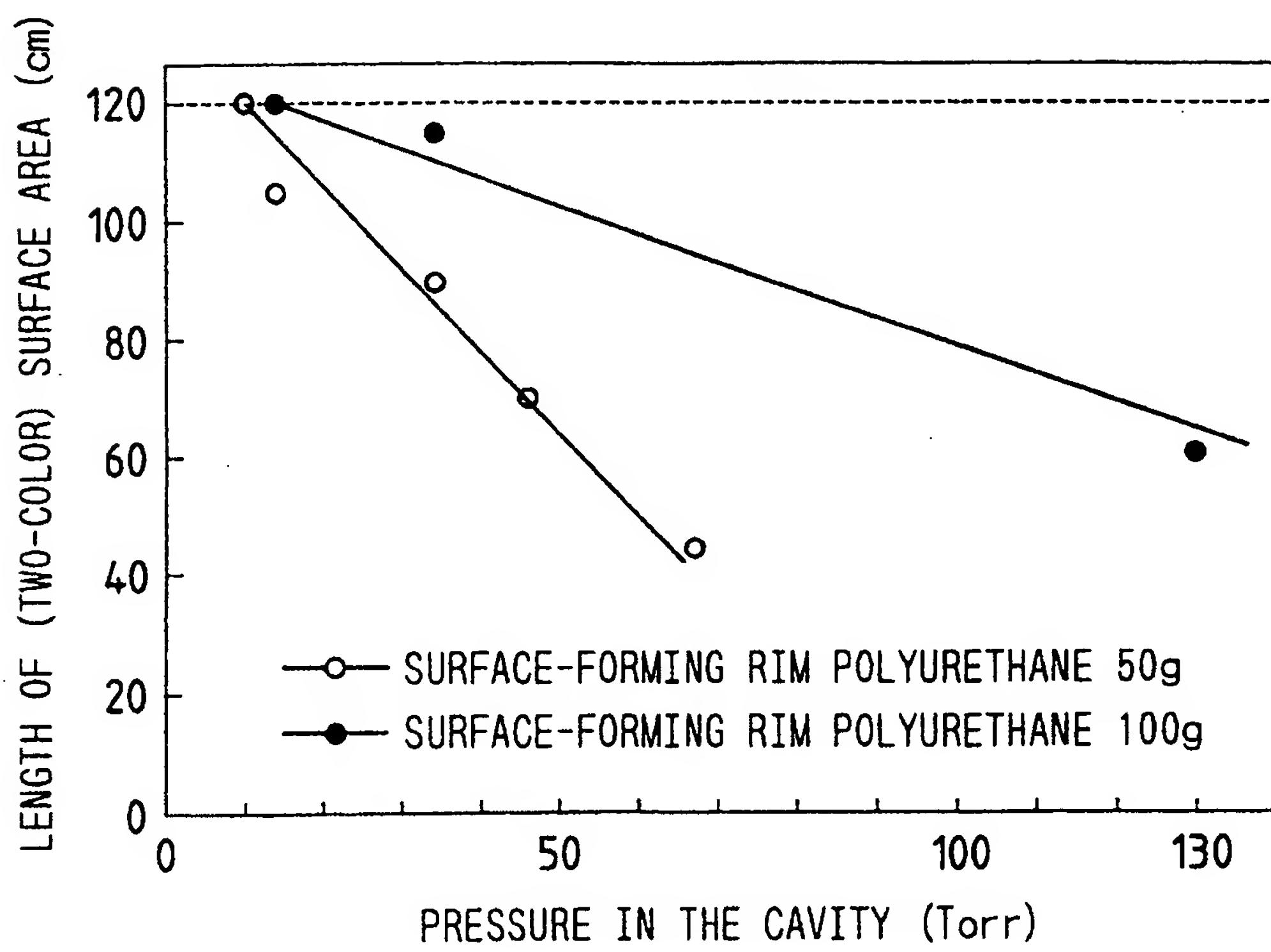


FIG. 11

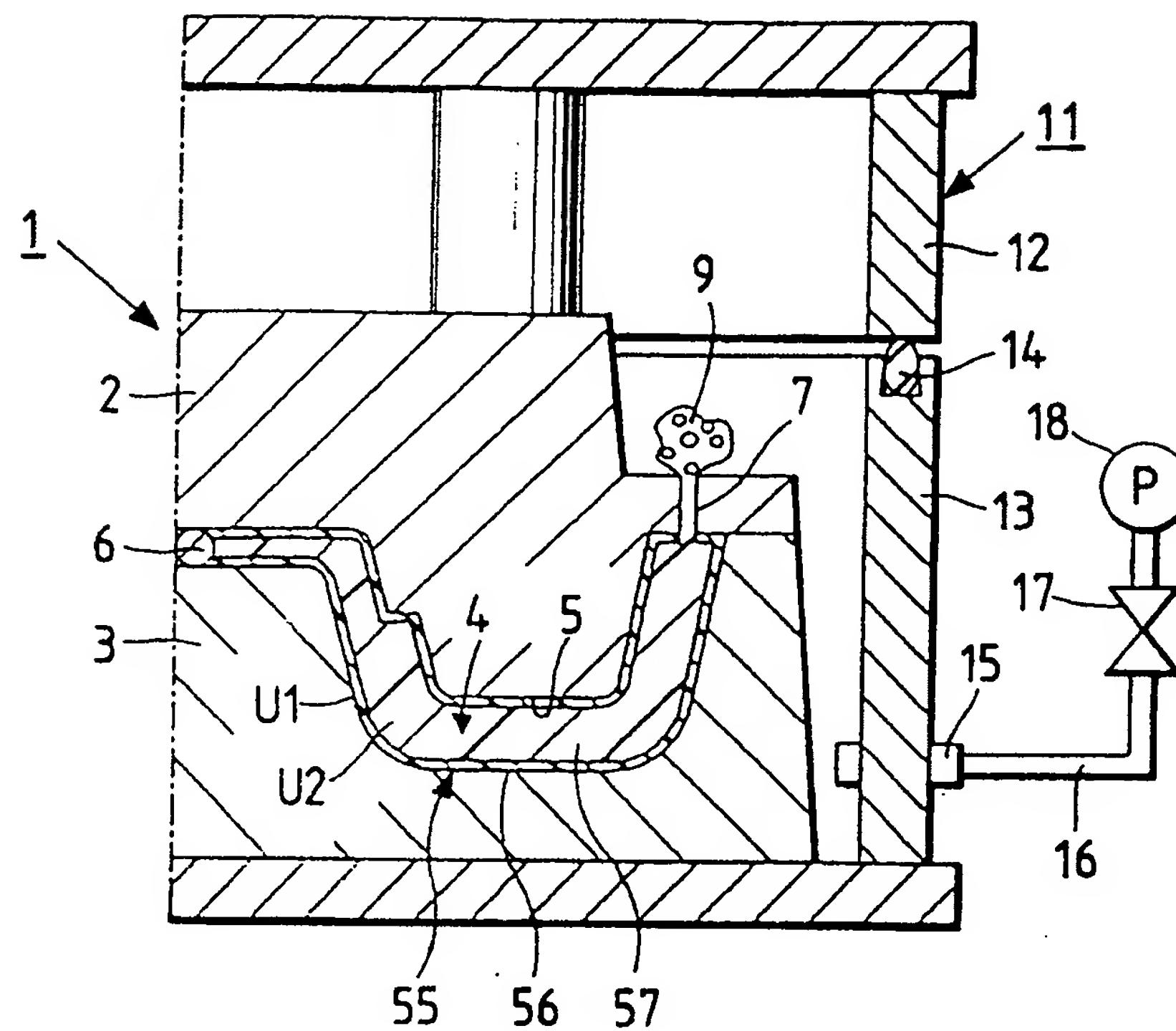


FIG. 12

